

**IN THE CLAIMS**

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A metal heater comprising:

a metal plate having a heating face;

a supporting device configured to support a semiconductor wafer over and apart from the heating face; and

at least one [[a]] heating element positioned to heat the metal plate,

wherein said metal plate has a thickness of 50 mm or less, ~~[[and]]~~ said heating face has a surface flatness of 50  $\mu$ m or less, and an outer rim of a region where said heating element is formed is at a position extends to an area within 25% of a diameter of said metal plate from an outer circumference of said metal plate.

Claim 2 (currently amended): ~~The [[A]] metal heater comprising a metal plate and a heating element according to Claim 1, further comprising a plurality of intermediate metal plates, wherein the number of said metal plate is a plural number,~~ said heating element is interposed between said intermediate metal plates, [[and]] said intermediate metal plates includes one a thickness of a metal plate on a heating face side is the same as or smaller than that of a metal plate and one on a side opposite to said heating face side, and said one of said intermediate metal plates on said heating face side has a thickness which is equal to or smaller than a thickness of said one of said intermediate metal plates on said side opposite to said heating face side.

Claim 3 (currently amended): ~~The [[A]] metal heater comprising a metal plate and a heating element according to Claim 1,~~ wherein said metal plate comprises an aluminum-copper alloy.

Claim 4 (new): The metal heater according to Claim 1, further comprising a plurality of through holes extending through said metal plate and said heating element.

Claim 5 (new): The metal heater according to Claim 1, further comprising at least one temperature measuring element positioned to measure a temperature of said heating face of said metal plate.

Claim 6 (new): The metal heater according to Claim 1, further comprising a supporting case encasing said metal plate and heating element therein.

Claim 7 (new): The metal heater according to Claim 6, further comprising a presser disposed on said supporting case and pressing an outer circumferential portion of said heating face of said metal plate.

Claim 8 (new): The metal heater according to Claim 1, further comprising an intermediate metal plate disposed between said metal plate and said heating element.

Claim 9 (new): The metal heater according to Claim 1, wherein said supporting device comprises a plurality of supporting pins projecting from the heating face.

Claim 10 (new): A metal heater comprising:  
a metal plate having a heating face;  
supporting means for supporting a semiconductor wafer over and apart from the heating face; and  
at least one heating element positioned to heat the metal plate,  
wherein said metal plate has a thickness of 50 mm or less, said heating face has a surface flatness of 50  $\mu\text{m}$  or less, and said heating element extends to an area within 25% of a diameter of said metal plate from an outer circumference of said metal plate.